Category of special tourism state

3836. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NA1K: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

whether Government has classified any State into special category tourism State;

if so, the names of the State and the criteria adopted for the purpose;

if not, whether Government has any proposal to classify any State or States as special category tourism State, specially the State of Goa, which is well known as an international tourist destination; and

if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI KANT1 SINGH): (a) Ministry of Tourism does not classify any State as speical category tourism State.

Does not arise.

There is no such proposal before the Ministry of Tourism.

Does not arise.

Tourist Security Force

3837. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that Government has directed the State Governments to set up Tourist Security Force;

if so, the details thereof;

whether such force would be under the control of the Central Government or accountable to the respective State Government; and

if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) 'Public Order' and 'Police' are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. As such, the prevention of crime, including crimes agaisnt tourists, is the primary responsibility of State Governments/Union Territories. However, Ministry of Tourism in consultation with Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence and State Government/Union Territories is in the process of framing guidelines for formation of a Tourist Security Organization comprising mainly of Ex-Servicemen for the safety and security of tourists.

Conducting spiritual tourism

3838. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

whether Government is aware that Sri Lanka has launched "spiritual tourism" where the main focus will be on taking foreign tourists to about 60 spots which relate to various stages of the Ramayana period;

if so, whether a similar co-ordinated concept of "spiritual tourism" identifying spots

of Ramayana period could be evolved so that exclusive excursion of four to five days' is conducted for foreign and domestic tourists; and

(c) whether such "spiritual tourism" could be replicated later on covering epics like Mahabharat, Dhampada (Buddhism), Adi Granth, (Sikhism) etc.?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATIAMBIKA SONI): (a) During the South Asia Tourism and Travel Exchange held in Delhi from April 18-20, 2008, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Board has distributed CDs and brochures promoting destinations related to Ramayana trail in Sri Lanka.

(b) and (c) Identification, development and promotion of tourist places is primarily undertaken by the concerned State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. Ministry of Tourism, however, provides financial assistance to States/Union Territories for development of tourist destinations/circuits including places of spiritual tourism based on proposals received from them in accordance with scheme guidelines subject to availability of funds and inter-se priority. During the Tenth Five Year Plan, 151 tourism projects were sanctioned for Rs. 42867.93 lakh for development and promotion of religious/spiritual places. During 2007-08, 32 projects for Rs. 10807.80 lakh have been sanctioned for such places.

Ministry of Tourism promotes tourism products of the country including spiritual tourism through its publicity campaigns in the print, electronic and outdoor media. Information is also disseminated through the website, brochures and posters and by the India tourism offices in the country and abroad.

Focus on water utilization

3839. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

whether 2007 was declared as Water Year by the Centre, despite the fanfare with which Government set out to focus on water utilization;

whether the other alarming trend in the current year has been that the concern over climate change hogged all the limelight, probably at the cost of water as a priority issue;

what proposals Government plan in the Eleventh Plan to include water quality issue under a chapter on environment and climate change; and

what concrete measures the draft policy has proposed during the Eleventh Plan period for water?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Government of India had declared the Year-2007 as "Water Year" with the focus on developing consensus on appropriate measures including legislation on better management of the water sector including participatory irrigation management, regulated use and conservation; timely completion of irrigation projects and maintenance of existing projects to ensure water availability to fanners; awareness programmes for the masses; organization of conferencs, workshops on important development and management issues etc.

During the Year, 2007, various activities were undertaken by the Ministry of Water Resources which include campaign on conservation of water, organizing of mass